

RADIO PROCEDURES - MARINE AND EMERGENCY DISTRESS

SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY – CALL:

A. If you are in distress (i.e., when threatened by grave and imminent danger) or are observing another vessel in distress, transmit the International Distress Call on Channel 16 “MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY THIS IS (state vessel’s name and assigned call letters, repeated 3 times)”.

If aboard a vessel in trouble--state:

1. WHO you are (your vessel’s call letters and name).
2. WHERE you are (your vessel’s position in latitude/longitude or true bearing and distance in nautical miles from a widely known geographical point; local names known only in the immediate vicinity are confusing).
3. WHAT is wrong.
4. Kind of assistance desired.
5. Number of persons aboard and the condition of any injured.
6. Present seaworthiness of your vessel.
7. Description of your vessel--length, type, cabin, masts, power, color of hull, superstructure, and trim.
8. Your listening frequency and schedule.

If observing another vessel in distress--give:

1. Your position and, if possible, the bearing and distance of the vessel in difficulty.
2. Nature of distress.
3. Description of the vessel in distress (see Item 7 above).
4. Your intentions, course, and speed, etc.
5. Your radio call sign, name of your vessel, listening frequency, and schedule.

NOTE: The international sign for an aircraft that wants to direct a surface craft to a vessel in distress is: Circling the surface craft, opening and closing the throttle or changing propeller pitch (noticeable by change in sound) while crossing ahead of the surface craft, and proceeding in the direction of the vessel in distress. If you receive such a signal, you should follow the aircraft. If you cannot do so, try to inform the aircraft by any available means. If your assistance is no longer needed, the aircraft will cross your wake, opening and closing the throttle or changing the propeller pitch. If you are radio equipped, you should attempt to communicate with the aircraft on Channel 16 when the aircraft makes the above signals or makes any obvious attempt to attract your attention. In the event you cannot communicate by radio, be alert for a message block dropped from the aircraft.

B. If you need INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE FROM THE COAST GUARD (other than in a distress), call COAST GUARD on Channel 16 (The Distress and Calling Frequency). In this situation you will normally be shifted to a common working frequency (21, 22, or 23) allowing the DISTRESS frequency to remain open.

RADIO CHECKS:

Do not use Channel 16 to call the Coast Guard merely for a radio check. Such use is prohibited by the Federal Communications Commission.

NOTIFY THE COAST GUARD PROMPTLY AS SOON AS THE EMERGENCY TERMINATES
